



CONGRESSMAN CURT WELDON

7th District Pennsylvania



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**STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN CURT WELDON
ARMY MODERNIZATION HEARING**

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This afternoon we will hold the third in a series of joint hearings to examine modernization plans in the fiscal year 1999 defense budget request. The purpose of today's hearing will be to examine a broad range of Army modernization programs and initiatives. As before, I am sharing the chair with my good friend and colleague, Duncan Hunter. My ranking member and good friend Owen Pickett and I look forward to working with the Chairman of the Procurement Subcommittee, his ranking member and good friend Norm Sisisky, and our colleagues of both Subcommittees.

Today, appearing before our two subcommittees, we are pleased to have Dr. Kenneth Oscar, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army for Research, Development and Acquisition. He is accompanied by his military deputy, Lieutenant General Paul Kern.

We share a common concern for the decline in defense spending over the last years. Despite a slight increase in requested funding for procurement, Defense Department R&D funding declines again this year, and is projected to decrease by an additional 14% over the FYDP.

Although the Army's entire modernization budget again appears to be sadly under-funded, I will focus on the Army's R&D funding which has decreased from \$5.0 billion in FY 98 to \$4.8 billion in FY 99, which represents only 13% of the Defense Department's \$36.1 billion request. In comparison, the Army's R&D request continues to be dwarfed by those of the other services - with the Navy at \$8.1 billion and the Air Force at \$13.6 billion. Even the Defense-wide request is \$ 9.3 billion, almost twice the Army's request.

Again this year, modernization budgets continue to be sacrificed as a "bill payer" for shortfalls in the services' personnel and readiness accounts. The Administration's budget submission to Congress continues to delay funding for modernization until after the turn of the century. In addition, just when the Army is attempting to develop leap-ahead technologies and systems for the army after next, which will counter the sophisticated threats of the 21st century, research and development funding is decreasing. That just doesn't make sense. We are eating our seed corn for the future.

Last Wednesday, 23 members of both the R&D and Procurement Subcommittees received extensive classified briefings from Central Intelligence Agency analysts regarding a multitude of present and future threats, to include proliferation of weapons systems around the world that pose increasingly stressing threats to our Army.

Two days later, four members of the Procurement and R&D subcommittees took briefings and observed a Comanche flight demonstration. As impressed as they were with Comanche, they were amazed that the Army's premier program to develop the "quarterback of the digital battlefield" has only a single operational prototype. Nobody in their right mind would attempt to develop a sophisticated aircraft such as Comanche without multiple prototypes. The F-18 E/F development, a modification to an existing aircraft, has seven development aircraft and the F-22 is planned to have about ten for its development program.

We read in the press that the Army has recently been chastised for lobbying the Congress for more money, because some courageous Army officials believe the Army's share of the defense budget is insufficient. The accounts do not question the Army's assessment of its budget, but rather state its crime was being inept at lobbying. Dr. Oscar and General Kern, I hope you both clearly understand that giving direct and complete answers here today, in response to member's questions, is not lobbying. We expect no less than your candid opinion when requested.